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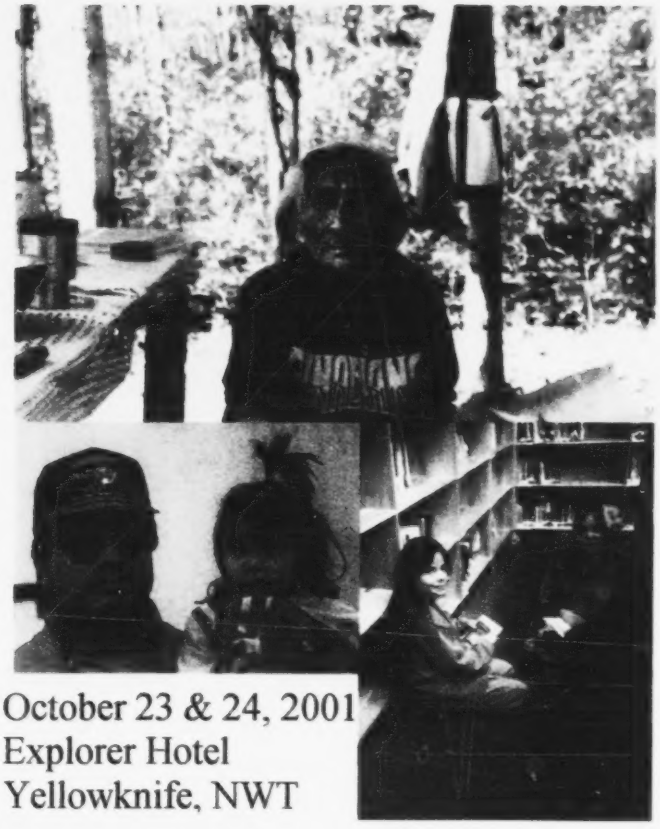
Advisory Board Meeting
Office of the Languages Commissioner



October 23 & 24, 2001
Explorer Hotel
Yellowknife, NWT

May 16, 2002

The Honourable Speaker
Legislative Assembly
Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Honourable Speaker

Attached for your information, and the information of the Members of the Legislative Assembly, is the report of the Office of the Languages Commissioner Advisory Board Meeting held October 23-24, 2001.

Contained in the report are:

1) Language Revitalization Regional Updates, and
2) Recommendations for Amendments to the Official Languages Act. These recommendations were based on the October 23-24, 2002, Advisory Board meetings. An overview of the recommendations was presented to the Special Committee on March 26, 2002, with the understanding that a comprehensive report would follow. This is that comprehensive report

I understand you will be tabling this report in the next session of the Legislative Assembly.

Mahsi

Fibbie Tatti
Languages Commissioner
Office of the Languages Commissioner
of the Northwest Territories

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Commissioner of the Northwest Territories, Glenna Hansen

I would like to speak to you about and encourage you concerning languages. Fibbie, thank-you for your invitation. I'd like to welcome the Elders, everybody that's involved in the languages, the staff. It gives me great pleasure to be here to speak to the importance of your efforts in the preservation and promotion of all official languages in the Northwest Territories. It is wonderful to see such diverse representation of languages and people from different language organizations and different communities.

This venue reminds me of when I was a member of the board of education. I can remember the issue of languages being brought to our attention and our meetings. I remember in those days that it was very difficult - very, very difficult for the aboriginal languages to be recognized. I remember as a board director thinking how could we encourage this? Those were very difficult times because of budgets and because we didn't have enough money in those days to see it go from the primary into the upper, high school level. I can remember those times and you know, we felt strongly about protecting the language and culture of the people. As you prepare for this review, I urge you to remain focused on this very task. The review allows you to reflect on the past and present. You assess and justify the future needs for the preservation and promotion of all official languages in the Northwest Territories.

The importance of community consultation will assist in this journey and it will take everyone's participation and cooperation to achieve the goal. I would like to thank you for being here. I recognize the dedication you have to this important issue and the wealth of knowledge that you will share with one another. When I think about languages, I think about people who have dedicated their lives and time to this task. It is important that we continue to strive together to promote the languages and protect them - when you think of the word *protect* it means to *guard*. We have to make sure we do not lose any ground.

I want to wish you all the best. I thank God for the traveling mercies that He gave you to come here. I pray that He will grant you the traveling mercies to go home and that He will protect your families while you're here so you can focus on the task that's ahead of you.

Once again, thank you Fibbie for your kindness and support to my office and I thank you people. If there is anything that I can do as the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories within my guidelines, I would be more than happy to assist you in any way that I can.

God bless you and take care of you.

NWT Languages Commissioner, Fibbie Tatti

Fibbie Tatti, Commissioner of Official Languages, thanked Glenna Hansen for her opening remarks and recalled visiting the Inuvialuit communities when Glenna introduced Fibbie to community language workers and organizations.

Ms Tatti recognized board members have had the difficult dual role of board work and interpreting in the past and thus acknowledged the importance of the interpreting team present. Fibbie also introduced Office staff, Sylvie Boisclair, Public Relations and Heather Bibby, Administrative Assistant and encouraged board members to contact them for any assistance they may require.

In welcoming Board members and guests, Fibbie asked particular care be given to Elders during the course of the meetings.

Following are excerpts from Ms Tatti's opening remarks.

Ten years ago when the Act first came into being, one guideline put in place was to review this Act after ten years to see if it was working for the people. For all those years we have lived and worked on these aboriginal languages -in the schools, in translation work, as chiefs - it was in all these different areas that we worked on the aboriginal languages. When they talk about the review of this Official Languages Act, we who have been working on the languages all these years, are the ones that must have our input into this review.

We have been in leadership position for languages for years – all of us around this table. I think we have a responsibility to provide that kind of direction for our people out there. If you look around the table, you have people from everywhere representative of the languages. We do have to provide that direction. That is what we're intending to do in the next couple of days – to work on the how are we going to try to help out there.

I feel a one-hour orientation to the Language Act at community hearings will not prepare you to be an active, informed participant to make the kind of recommendations that are required. What is really important here is that when we go back into our communities, when we participate at the community level, we are prepared to make informed presentations.

We've worked on programs and curriculum development – most of us. We now have to concentrate a little bit on legislation. We have to work on the Act and see how it can serve us better. This group has that kind of leadership and that kind of background to do that. It's a shift in the focus of what we used to do. There is nobody out there that has as much experience as you have, in terms of leadership for languages.

One of the things that we've always talked about is that our language is our language. It is up to us to determine what it is going to be. We can't have people out there telling us – this is what we think your language should be. I think the people themselves have to say, "This is what our language is to us. This is how the Act can best serve us." This is the work we must prepare for. Within the next year, there will be community hearings in reviewing the Act. Within the next two days, you will discover how much work it is to be an informed participant in the community hearings.

I keep thinking there is so much work to be done. On the other hand, when we were working on Dene Kede K-6 and Dene Kede 7-9 we knew how difficult it was going to be and we still had a lot of fun working on the curricula. One thing you should know is that Dene Kede is being used in the University of Saskatchewan – it's a prerequisite to graduating with a Bachelor of Education degree. Yesterday we talked about the Languages Act as one of our finest moments. I think Dene Kede as a prerequisite for a person to get a degree in education at a university is another thumbs up for us – one more thing we have done and again one of our finest moments. I think at lunch time when you are sitting and relaxing, I think you should just kick your shoes off and say, "That was me."

Now we have something else to work towards. We're shifting focus in terms of the things that we used to do … but I expect we'll continue with the great working relationship that we have.

Language Revitalization Updates

Following are board member updates on language work in their regions and communities. (See Appendix 3 for transcripts)

Dogrib

Phillip Rabesca, George Mackenzie, Mrs. Mackenzie, Mary Richardson, Alphonse Enoch

Phillip Rabesca, Chairperson of the Dogrib Language Community Committee, presented an update of language work being undertaken by the Dogrib Language Community.

Organization. The Dogrib Language Community Committee operates within the Dogrib Community Service Board (DCSB), which is responsible for education, health and social services. The Committee, comprised of two members from each of the five Dogrib communities, Wha Ti, Gameti, Wekweti, Dettah and Rae-Edzo, meets three times a year. Because DCSB is based in Rae-Edzo, community leaders decided the language centre offices would also be based in Rae-Edzo to maintain a close working relationship with DCSB. There have been organizational changes over the past year. The DCSB Chief Executive Officer has changed and all language centre staff, offices and facilities are now housed in the Nishi Khon Complex in Rae. Elders and Committee members who are not employed elsewhere receive an honorarium.

Planning. Once the transition was complete and funding received the Dogrib language committee met in Wha Ti in October 2001 to review the funding and language plan, and develop a detailed budget. Language Committee meetings are held in each of the five Dogrib communities on a rotational basis. The Committee reviews the Dogrib Language Plan and community project funding proposals.

Dogrib Language Community Projects

Since last year, the Dogrib Language Community funded eight projects with sixteen planned for the coming year. Phillip described the following projects:

1) Language Survey. In undertaking the language survey of five communities, only one community, Rae, remains to be completed. Initial results show that Dogrib language use is declining. Once the report is complete, the Committee will present the results to the Department of Education Culture and Employment, community leaders and the Dogrib Service Board in order to determine how to help young people use the language more. "The elders are saying that when we don't know our language, we don't know what kind of person we are, so they're giving us a message. We're going to look at the survey and look at what's happening to the language."

2) Publications. Current publishing projects include a *Third Edition of the Dogrib Language Dictionary*, *Dogrib Prayer Book* (including a *Second Edition*). The prayer book will be complemented by audiotapes. A video production *Tłı̨ı̨cho K'ıę̀ıę* the making of a canoe, was completed.

Human Resource Development. Phillip stressed the importance of interpreter/translator training. Refresher courses in medical and legal translation and interpreting will be funded and will initially be offered in cooperation with the Chief Jimmy Bruneau High School in Rae-Edzo.

Communication. Elders say it very important to provide important language information to the general public. A conference is planned for May 2002 in order to present results of the Dogrib Language Survey and provide information on language programs and projects. Those aware of loss of language and culture, youth, and elders will be invited to the conference, which will be open to the public in general.

"If we don't make our people aware of information out there, what's going to happen to our language? ... Our people are telling us this. You who are working on the Dene languages, we appreciate your work. If you can make it better for the community, if you can make the community aware of Acts and laws that are available for Dene, you will make it available. The information will sit there for a future generation. This is how and why our Dogrib language community continues to work closely together."

Inuvialuktun and Innuinaqtun

Emily Kudlak, Rosie Allen

Renie Arey, Inuvialuit Cultural Resource Centre (ICRC) and Emily Kudlak, ICRC, Holman Island presented updates on Inuvialuit language projects.

Organization. The Inuvialuit Language Community is like a Teaching and Learning Centre and is under the auspices of the Inuvialuit Cultural Centre and works with six communities - Inuvik, Aklavik, Holman Island, Tuktoyaktuk, Paulatuk and Sachs Harbour. ICRC works with three dialects and hires resource people in communities to provide support in the three dialects. ICRC works closely with language teachers and provides program support. There are plans to move the language centre to a larger facility in November.

Publications. Pictionaries in three dialects have just been published, also a dictionary in the Sigalik dialect in Tuktoyaktuk, and dialects of Sachs Harbour and Paulatuk. Emily Kudlak is now completing the Holman dialect and there are plans for publishing in the Aklavik and Inuvik dialects. Soon to be completed are booklets with CDs made from tape recordings. Currently an illustrated book about reindeer were coming from Alaska long ago is being prepared for publication. A prayer book is being developed with the Anglican minister.

Child Development Centres. Currently there are three communities with child development centres where children are learning to speak their language. ICRC will fund child development centres in each community if the children are learning to speak their language and provides instructors.

On the Land Programs. ICRC supports school On the Land Programs with language teachers. Contracted to community corporations, the On the Land Programs provide real experiences, such as muskrat trapping, fox trapping, sewing, drum dancing, whaling on the coast. Fishing experiences closer to the community are also arranged.

Adult Language Classes. ICRC recently began Inuvialuit language classes for the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation from 11 am to 1 pm.

Partnered Learning. Renie spends two hours every Wednesday with Elder Rosie Albert for literacy training.

Resource Development. The Language Centre has collected over 1,000 tapes made in the past and some made by ICRC, which Elders are in the process of translating into English.

Holman Island. Emily Kudlak reported specifically for Holman Island, a community of 450 people with three dialects. Many projects are being undertaken in both Inuviluktun and Inuinnaqtun. Consultations with youth about where their interests were in terms of language and culture showed an interest in drum dancing. As a result, drum dancing for youth and adults is held twice a week. During the dances, songs are taught, as well as the movements, meanings of the songs, how to pronounce words and how they are written. After-school programs include tool-making, sled making, on-the-land trips where net making and cabin building is taught. Evening pre-school programs are held where there is teaching of song and rhymes. Emily said she would like to see summer school programs for high school students where they could get funding to do mini-projects in their languages.

Chipewyan

JC Catholique reported on Chipewyan language activities in Lutselk'e.

Organization. There is a regional coordinator for Chipewyan communities Lutselk'e, Denínu Ku'e, and Fort Smith under the auspices of Akaitcho Territory Government. In Lutselk'e, the Dene Wotchina offices are in the Development Corporation Building with plans to relocate to the centre of town, more accessible to people and Elders, and a facility more suitable for having coffee and tea with Elders while recording their stories. Functions of the coordinator include fundraising, financial management, meetings with the regional coordinator and Akaitcho Territory communities. The coordinator also made school visits, lobbied government for resource materials, attended ECE's Echoes of the Language Conference and the Chipewyan Language Festival.

Chipewyan language community members actively participate in annual gatherings with other Chipewyan in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta numbering about 20,000 individuals with the Northwest Territories group approximately 1500. The most recent gathering of 700 people (the largest since beginning in 1982) was held in Wollaston Lake, Saskatchewan. Governance - how to organize as a Dene Suliné Nation – is discussed. This year Dene Suliné Grand Council was established with plans for instituting a president and other organizational protocols for year 2004. The gatherings also serve as a venue to exchange information including environmental issues related to mining.

Promotion. The Chipewyan language committee organized many promotional and fundraising activities including the following: Chipewyan language bingo held every Wednesday where everything including calling numbers was in Chipewyan; advertising Chipewyan language through t-shirts, mugs, posters, etc., a Chipewyan language luncheon was held in June where everyone must speak Chipewyan before they could get fed; Chipewyan word of the day where every day a new word is posted in the Band office (Elders provided the words in both Roman orthography and syllabics); and Dene Wotchina language

song contest in four categories: elders, adult, youth and children. There was also a joke category. This was a popular event and resulted in a lot of singing and laughter that day.

Publications. Funds raised from the promotional activities were used to record church hymns, which were produced on CD by Akaitcho Territory Government. Three main prayer songs and a song will be used in the school at the beginning of each day, and there are plans to supplement the CDs with written words for the children to follow.

Language Programs. The committee raised $8,000 from the Dene Nation Language Initiative Fund for a two-week language camp at the spiritual gathering. During the camp, Chipewyan is taught through songs and traditional games. Besides cultural activities such as drying meat and fish, there was a hike on a traditional route the first three miles before going to the barrenlands. In addition, the committee contributed $5,000 for a pre-kindergarten language program where one Elder was hired to work with the children to teach Chipewyan.

Human Resource Development. The committee is lobbying Aurora College to start the interpreting program as a result of high demand for interpreters in light of development in the region. JC pointed out the interpreting program enhances the language especially since there is no linguistic program offered.

Communication. The committee plans to sponsor the next Dene Wotchina Language Conference in February or March and will serve as a forum for exchange of information in terms of education and strategies for keeping the language strong. In addition, the conference serves as an avenue for people reconnecting with relatives lost because of boundaries and distance.

Gwich'in

William George

Elder Mrs. Jane Charlie and William George presented updates on Gwich'in language plan, administered by the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute, part of the Gwich'in Tribal Council.

Organization. William George began work in July with the Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute Five-Year Gwich'in Language Plan and is supported by an Elders Advisory Council and works with specific projects with the Gwich'in Language Centre. The Gwich'in Language Plan includes many projects, about fifteen of which are not supported by funding, therefore new plans will downsize the number of projects. Strong ties are maintained with Gwich'in language workers in Yukon and Alaska where parents still speak to their children in Gwich'in.

Community Visits. Initial work undertaken to implement the Gwich'in Language Plan included community visits for the purposes of outlining the Plan and also to survey youth in communities regarding language. Happily, survey results show that young people have a positive attitude towards re-learning their language.

Language Survey. There are plans to visit communities to do a language survey to start in Aklavik.

Publications. Work is ongoing on the dictionary project documenting the many words that was used in the past but not too commonly used today. Dictionary work is being done in Arctic Red River and Fort McPherson where elders explain the word meanings and correct

pronunciation. Gwich'in Elders Biography Calendars will continue – last year seven biographies were completed, twelve this past summer with plans to complete more next year. Also, a medical terminology handbook is under development to be released by Christmas.

Immersion Programs. Working with the Gwich'in Teaching and Learning Centre, pre-school bilingual programs have been operating with children successfully learning Gwich'in and plans are underway for developing kindergarten immersion. Immersion is a concept that has met with success in Alaska. Creating materials for immersion programs has proved to be very challenging.

David Krutko, MLA Mackenzie Delta and Member of SCOL

For two weeks past July, six young people, two elders and language community workers travelled to a traditional Gwich'in location up the Arctic Red River during which time only the Gwich'in language was spoken. The trip went well and all were pleased with the results.

Communication. William indicated there is a need for sharing program development initiatives in order to avoid duplication as new people come on line.

Fort McPherson. Elder, Mrs. Jane Charlie spoke about language activities in Fort McPherson. Mrs. Charlie said she has been attending many meetings regarding language and there is a lot of work being done. As Elders, they are studying the Bible and having fun teaching it to children. School programs include on-the-land projects with Elders. Children learn to snowshoe, set nets and rabbit snares, set tents, cut wood with an axe. Elders also teach old-time dances to younger children and teenagers. In addition, in 1995, Mrs. Charlie's husband went back and opened a 100-year-old trail, which is now being used every winter and they are busy in March taking anyone interested in following the trail. They also go over the mountains in March.

"Last winter I went with them – we traveled 12 hours one day on the skidoo and the next day I got up – I was fine. I followed his trail, I am happy and half the time I'm crying. This one trip I got myself ready and the Lord help me, I will be on that trail again……This about our language, I am very, very happy. Try your best. Try hard. God will give you strength and you will win. We will talk our language and they will listen."

South Slavey

Elder Mrs. Adele Hardisty, Andy Norwegian (DehCho Teaching and Learning Centre) and Joachim Bonnetrouge (DehCho First Nations Language Community Committee) presented updates on South Slavey language work.

Elder Mrs. Adele Hardisty. Mrs. Hardisty spoke about her long involvement with language work, which includes sitting on the Subject Advisory Board for Dene Kede curriculum development. Mrs. Hardisty stressed the importance of mothers to become more aware of language issues and understanding their role in teaching children their language from a very young age, when they are being held close and hearing their parents' words. Mrs. Hardisty reflected on how she herself learned from her parents by listening. Mrs. Hardisty taught one-hour classes in schools and used the same approach of having children listen to her as she speaks in her own language. "... just an hour at a time I talk to the children in my own language. I sit amongst them with their teachers and the teacher would interpret for me." In reflecting on the language work, Mrs. Hardisty said, "Now I'm really happy and grateful about the Dene language and everything here is beginning to come together. Even in the schools, the people can talk to them..... I think things like that can happen."

Doris Camsell, Adele Hardisty

Dehcho Teaching and Learning Centre

Organization. The Dehcho Teaching and Learning Centre is part of the DehCho Divisional Education Council which administers nine schools in the region. Although the Language Centre concentrates on language activities within school boundaries, any language work done outside schools is seen as an enhancement to school programs and express their support in working with the DehCho First Nations language community committee. Andy said they were particularly interested in working with the middle age group which was identified in the Language Survey as the people who are not transmitting language and culture.

Denise Kurzewski, Fanny Swartzentruber

Human Resource Development. With language instructors retiring or coming to retirement, there is an urgency to develop human resources. The Centre works with Arctic College in delivering aboriginal language teaching courses leading to certification. To date there has been good participation in the two courses, which were open to language instructors, adult education students, and others in the community interested in teaching the aboriginal language. The Centre is making strong effort to recognize language instructors who have been working for years, and plans are to encourage language instructors to make presentations to the committee undertaking the review of the Language Act.

School Programs. Over the past ten years, the Centre has been working on developing and implementing Dene Kede K-6 and the draft Dene Kede 7-9, the Dene language curricula that were developed by consulting with Elders, including Adele Hardisty and Joachim Bonnetrouge, who advised the curriculum committee on how children can learn to be a Dene person and how to teach in the Dene way.

Publications. The South Slavey language dictionary developed over ten years is an over 800-page work that explains language structure and contains verb stems. Currently more words are being added to it and there are plans to put the dictionary on CD-Rom.

Communication. Every fall, the Centre takes the opportunity during the regional teachers' conference to bring in all language instructors for the purpose of sharing important information related to languages. For example, last year the Official Language Act and the review, was discussed. Also, teaching courses include information on language issues and how it relates to language teaching.

South Slavey Language Community

Planning. As part of planning process, over 1000 people were interviewed in assessing the state of languages in the DehCho. Organizing training and strategic planning workshops in DehCho communities was part of the process resulting in comprehensive language strategic plans in almost every community.

Organization. DehCho First Nation leaders decided to allocate all their language funding to communities and delegated one part-time coordinator position responsible for administering the language program by reviewing proposals and allocating funds to communities in a timely fashion.

Language Survey Observations. The most surprising result was that just 64% of DehCho Elders are fluent in their language. As age groups become younger, language fluency decrease rapidly: adults 37%; youth 12%; children 2.9%. Although Fort Liard is the strongest language community, English is the stronger language for 50% of the community. In terms of priorities in people's lives, survey results showed that language and culture was not a priority. On a more positive note, in terms of where language is strongest, in Fort Providence, social gathering such as card happen totally in Dene language. Joachim Bonnetrouge said it is important to recognize positive things in our communities and take advantage of other language settings where people come together.

Community Projects. The majority of language projects currently being funded are language camps with Elders, and although they do not necessarily reflect all elements of strategic plans, they are projects that can be quickly undertaken and will hopefully lead to related projects such as language immersion schools. One project being considered is a pilot Dene immersion program for the region. Another ambitious undertaking would be establishing a Dene language radio station to cover the ten communities.

North Slavey

Jessie Campbell

Jessie Campbell recently began work with the Teaching and Learning Centre for the Sahtu Divisional Board of Education and reported on Sahtu language activities.

Organization. The Language Centre is staffed by one coordinator and four part-time Teaching and Learning Centre personnel working within the Sahtu schools and supporting full-time K-12 North Slavey language instructors. Language centre staff participate on the language community committee established within Sahtu First Nations.

Community Projects

Tulita. Victor Morris Mendo and Ricky Andrew with Violet Wrigley interpreting for students provided drumming workshops with schoolchildren.

Deline. Past year activities included on-the-land cultural classes and hymns in Slavey with Rosie Sewi.

Fort Good Hope. Fred Rabisca coordinated on-the-land projects.

Norman Wells. Attended by Fibbie Tatti and George Blondin, was a workshop on families and syllabics with Tobak.

Human Resource Development. Liz Hanson, Aurora College, provided a three-week literacy course in Inuvik.

French

Daniel Lamoureux, franco-TéNOISE, reported on French language community activities.

Daniel Lamoureux

Organization. The French community has gained strength in the Mackenzie communities including in Tuktoyaktuk and others.

Planning. The three-year strategic plan includes creating an economic development society to help Francophone entrepreneurs to either develop currently owned businesses or start new ones.

Infrastructure. Plans include the establishment of a second French school controlled by a French School Commission, the only French school board in the Northwest Territories; and building two cultural centres within the next five years, one in Hay River and one in Fort Smith. Franco-TéNOISE unsuccessfully attempted to access support from the federal Western economic development fund because the program does not apply to the Territories.

School Programs. There are French immersion programs in Yellowknife, Fort Smith and Hay River with plans to start another in Inuvik within the next year.

Human Resource Development. Still to be completed is a needs assessment in training, funded by the Federal Government. It is anticipated that study results will lead to new programs that improve employability of Francophones

Communications. Public communications is made possible through L'Aquilon (the North Wind), a weekly newspaper widely distributed throughout the Territories and Radio Taiga, a radio station subsidized by the Federal Government is based in Yellowknife with plans to become territorial-wide within the next year.

Promotion There have been a variety of writing contests in both Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Franco-TéNOISE is still waiting for a response to a request made in January, for funding for a $200,000 promotional project.

Dene Cultural Institute

Raymond Sonfrere is the assistant director of the Dene Cultural Institute (DCI) and sits on the Office of the Languages Commissioner Advisory Board on behalf of the Dene Cultural Institute. Raymond's language work spans approximately twenty years as an interpreter for the government and his people.

Raymond noted when DCI started in 1986 Elders were saying they did not want to lose their language and culture. That message has not changed. Raymond affirmed DCI's commitment to working towards the goal of language and cultural preservation and is happy to be working on the Board. Raymond emphasized that "working with the language we want to keep and the culture we want to keep is no small thing" and emphasized that in looking at language to remember the words of the Elders that language is not a separate entity but one with the land, the culture and the way you pray – our spiritual way.

In our work, Raymond asked members to remember the strong nation from which we come. "In the past, our Elders have been through a lot of difficult times, but they never gave up – they always continued on and now we have a big job to do .... As we work – we can't give up - we have to keep our minds strong."

National Chief of the Dene Nation, Bill Erasmus

Guest speaker, Bill Erasmus made the following presentation.

We are really pleased that you are having this meeting. I am really quite pleased to be here to hear people speaking their language.

The Dene Nation, as you know, is very concerned. We do administer some funding through the Assembly of First Nations and it is in its last year of existence as it is. As far as I know there will be a new program starting next fiscal year. There is also some endangered language money being funded through a cultural institution in Ontario.

There really is not enough money put into our languages - you know that more than anyone else. I think what we need to do is combine the dollars that are out there, the different pots - and you are probably talking about this - combine the different money that is out there and put it into one and have the people administer accordingly.

Our office, for example, should not be administering programs. The money should be out in the regions. It should be where the languages are. That is what I would like to encourage - that we bring dollars together from wherever the sources are, federal, territorial, put them together and decide where they should go. Say if it is North Slavey for example, then it should go to the North Slavey people and they should decide where the money should go because they know their priorities. They are the ones that speak the language and there should be a lot of flexibility around it. For example, if they feel that all the money should go in the school, then I think that is where it should go. Then next year it might go somewhere else, but people should set their own priorities.

Otherwise, I am afraid our languages are going to die and it will happen in our lifetime. It is going to happen very quickly. There are some communities in the south where only five or six Elders can speak their language fluently.. If we do not make a major effort and if we do not speak on a daily basis then that will happen here.

I really want to commend you. I want to encourage you and I just want to let you know that we will do everything that we can. I intend to meet with Fibbie and other people who are involved in languages to make this a campaign that can work.

Closing Remarks – Elder Elizabeth Mackenzie

Elizabeth Mackenzie, Mary Siemens

I would like to share a short word with you. When you meet and talk about language it is very good and you always feel good about it. Although we never finish the work, we always continue because we want to work with the children. We want to help the children.

There are many beautiful things that people possessed that we now possess. There are many things that parents have passed on to their children and we become a very big person by it - we become a valuable person.

Our ancestors have done a lot of work, but we cannot see it. If we want to look at what they have done, the only thing we can see today is where they have traveled, where they have camped in the past. We see the rocks that they have left behind which were used for fishing. Those are things that are visible, but what they have given us for our own knowledge is in us.

It seems like they have given us a great deal of things for us to carry on in our lives. Today, all of us who are here in this meeting, each one of us possesses beautiful, valuable information from our parents. That is one of the reasons we are all here together - because we possess this information. If we did not listen to our parents we would not have retained those, but because we listen to our parents and we have retained their knowledge we are here. We may not be very strong as one, but we are powerful as a group. We will be very powerful when we work together.

So, do good work. You are going to tackle a very special, important work. You have to watch how you say, what you say and how you say it and to take care of yourselves. If you take care of yourselves, we will be at a meeting like this again together.

Closing Prayer - Andy Norwegian

We were faced with a number of questions during our meeting over the past two days. We asked, Why? Why is our language so important to us? Why is it important that we do not lose our language?

When I think about those questions, I always remember a story that was something an Elder has said that always reminds me of why I am working in the area of languages. It is a story that I use personally to get my spirit moving again. I hope that it gives you the same spirit it gives to me.

An Aboriginal Elder was once asked why is our language so important? And he replied:

What if you woke up one morning and you saw on the branch of a tree a robin and it was singing the song of the sea gull? How would you feel? You probably would feel that in the Creator's law something has gone wrong and it is in this way that it is not meant for us to lose our language. Amen.

Advisory Board Workshop Discussions and Recommendations for the Review of the Official Languages Act

Introduction

"I remember after the Task Force, after the Task Force which led to the NWT Official Languages Act which recognized Aboriginal Languages as official, a government leader at that time approached me and said, 'You have gone far beyond your mandate.' That was then and here we are ten years later with the opportunity to reflect on the past and look to the future, and again exceed our mandate."

Fibbie Tatti, NWT Languages Commissioner

In the fall of 2001 (October 23 and 24), in Yellowknife, the NWT Languages Commissioner Advisory Board held a two-day workshop to consider a number of issues related to the NWT Official Languages Act. The purpose of the workshop was to provide the NWT Languages Commissioner with Board opinion on how the NWT Official Languages Act might be revised and improved to become a more effective instrument in NWT language enhancement and development. The Commissioner was to use the information from the workshop to make a presentation to the NWT Legislative Assembly's Special Committee for the Review of the Official Languages Act (SCOL), and also to provide board members with a grounding in bringing issues and discussion to community members for their presentations to SCOL during community consultations.

During the workshop, legal counsel for the Office of the Languages Commissioner (Shannon Gullberg) provided members with useful background information on the Act including summary information on three sections of the Act: 1-8; 9-16 and 18-25; and issues related to those sections that lacked definition and prevented effective NWT language enhancement and development support. Advisory members then broke into smaller groups to discuss the different sections of the Act and related issues, with each group presenting a summary of their discussions with recommendations for revisions to each section.

Outlined in this report are the main elements of the background information presented, issues raised and recommendations. As the reader will see there were three central themes to the Advisory Board discussions.

Theme #1. Act Lacks Aboriginal Perspective

Advisory Board members say there is no aboriginal perspective to the Act and cite examples: the Act is written and published in English and French but not the eight aboriginal languages; and the Act groups languages together without due regard to the important cultural and linguistic differences between groups, i.e., North and South Slavey; and Inuktitut, Inuvialuktun and Innuinaqtun. Further, the Act does does not enshrine important institutions such as the Language Bureau.

Theme #2. Act Assigns Lower Status to Aboriginal Languages

Advisory Board members agree that under the Act English and French are accorded much higher status than any of the Official Aboriginal Languages and cite examples: Legislative Assembly presentations can be made in either English or French but with aboriginal languages on an 'as needed basis' - the latter not defined; all NWT Acts and journals must be printed in both English and French but not in the Official Aboriginal languages unless directed by the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories; and Government interpreter service is mandatory for English and French but only in Official Aboriginal Languages if there is "significant demand" or because of the "nature of the office". Both requirements are undefined.

Theme #3: Expand Office of the Languages Commissioner Roles & Responsibilities

Advisory Board members say the Office of the Languages Commissioner must have expanded roles and responsibilities in the areas of language enhancement and development including: coordination, planning, research, monitoring and evaluation. Advisory Board members believe expanded roles and responsibilities for the Office would do much to improve the spirit and the intent of the Act in preserving and strengthening NWT aboriginal languages.

Background

"An Elder was once asked, why is our language so important? And he replied, what if you woke up one morning and you saw on the branch of a tree a robin and it was singing the song of the sea gull? How would you feel? You probably would feel that in the Creator's law something has gone wrong and it is in this way that it is not meant for us to lose our language."

Andy Norwegian, at the October 2001 meeting of the Advisory Board of the Office of the Languages Commissioner of the NWT

In 1982, the Federal government initiated amendments to the Northwest Territories Act with the intent of making French and English official languages of the Northwest Territories. The attempt to legislate English and French as official languages of the NWT initiated a powerful force to recognize NWT Aboriginal languages in the same manner as English and French. In 1984, the NWT Official Languages Act was passed, legislating English and French official languages with aboriginal languages recognized by regulation.

In 1986, the Government of the Northwest Territories appointed the Aboriginal Task Force to investigate and make recommendations on how aboriginal languages of the North could and should be used, developed and promoted. During community hearings, words spoken by northern citizens re-affirmed language as a cultural worldview, and that aboriginal languages should be recognized equally with French and English. By 1990, the Act was amended giving official status to eight languages - Cree, Chipewyan, Dogrib, English, French, Gwich'in, Inuktitut (including Innuinaqtun and Inuvialuktun and Slavey (including North Slavey and South Slavey.) The Act also protects the Official Languages by directing the government to undertake initiatives that lead to Official Aboriginal language preservation, enhancement and development (Section 20[1]).

The 1990 amendments also established the NWT Office of the Languages Commissioner, and in 1992, the first Languages Commissioner for the Northwest Territories was appointed. Also, Section 29 of the NWT Official Languages Act requires a ten-year review of the Act. It is this ten-year review that the NWT Legislative Assembly's Special Committee on the Review of the Official Languages Act (SCOL) is currently undertaking.

As legal counsel (Shannon Gullberg) points out, we shall see over the course of the workshops, that the NWT Official Languages Act gives English and French prominence and some status to Aboriginal languages and is a compromise between the Federal government and the NWT Legislative Assembly. Any amendments that may decrease language rights in the Act can be made only with consent of the Parliament of Canada.

The following Table 1 outlines sections of the Act dealt with during the workshop and what is established by various sections of the Act.

Table 1. Workshop Discussions on Sections of the Languages Act

Workshop	Sections	What the sections establish
1	1-8	1) Official languages for the Northwest Territories 2) Institutions to which the Act applies 3) Rights and privileges of official languages
2	9-16	1) Use of Official Languages in the Legislative Assembly 2) Which government documents must be printed in the various Official Languages 3) Language rights in court 4) When a member of the public can demand services in the various Official Languages.
3	18-25	1) Office of the Languages Commissioner 2) Powers and authority of the Languages Commissioner

Sections 1-8

Issues

With Sections 1-8, legal counsel Shannon Gullberg identified three sets of issues: Definition of Language; Institutions to which the Act applies; and who has rights and privileges under the Act.

1. **Definition of Language:** Although the Act designates a number of languages - Chipewyan, Cree, Dogrib, English, French, Gwich'in, Inuktitut (including Inuinaqtun and Inuvialuit) and Slavey (including North Slavey and South Slavey) - as official languages, the Act does not provide a definition for language nor criteria for official language status. Some say it is too difficult to define language, concluding if common language names apply people themselves can decide if they speak an official language. Others say if language is defined too narrowly, dialects that should be included will be overlooked.

   In light of the ever changing 'language landscape', it is important to have clear definitions of language. Without such definitions, the public is left with unanswered questions that make Act enforcement 'guess work'. These questions include: If a language is not likely to last, should it get official status? If a new language is developing, how does it fit into legislation? What is the purpose of granting official language status – What is the goal? Is legislation the best way of achieving the goal? In asking whether official languages in the current Act should be amended, what is our perspective of language and what are the criteria for making languages official?

2. **Institutions to Which the Act Applies:** The Act is restrictive - applying to some groups and excluding others. Indeed, Section 8 states the Act applies to the Legislative Assembly and Government of the Northwest Territories, while Section 3 states, for the purposes of the Act, municipalities, therefore hamlet councils, bands, city and town councils, are not part of the Legislative Assembly in the Northwest Territories. This is also true of private industry which is excluded from compliance with the Act - a particularly important exclusion now that government services are more frequently delivered by the private sector. How do these restrictions impact on effective Act implementation?

3. **Who Has Language Rights and Privileges**: In considering rights and privileges of the Act, a central question arises: "Who holds rights and privileges under the Act? An individual? A group? Depending on who is interpreting the Act, responses vary. If an individual holds rights and privileges, then the inclination may be to deal with complaints about language services on an individual basis, case by case. If a group holds rights and privileges, then the inclination may be to examine the broader issue of how to protect the interest of that specific one group - which may be more difficult in the short term, but more meaningful and permanent in the long term.

Comments and Recommendations

Elder Eddy Weyallon with Elizabeth Mackenzie Elementary School students

"The language we want to keep, and the culture we want to keep – that's not a very small thing."

Raymond Sonfrere
Dene Cultural Institute

1. **Language Definition:** Advisory Board members agree the Act should clearly define language and criteria for official language status under the NWT Official Languages Act. Members say official aboriginal languages should be those languages that originated and grew out of a life lived on the land. In other words, the land created a place for language. As such, members say language criteria selected must reflect that each Aboriginal language lies within specific geographic areas whose boundaries reflect the pre-contact, traditional economic, linguistic and cultural practices of each group. For this reason, South Slavey, North Slavey, Innuinaqtun and Inuvialuit should be designated official languages. Members say real names of official languages should be used - e.g. *Tlicho, Sahtu* ...

2. **Institutions to Which the Act Applies:** Advisory Board members say the Act should apply to all government departments and boards, agencies, and private contractors receiving funds from the GNWT including transportation services, community governments, medical and court services and programs, policing. Members believe a major drawback in Act implementation was the lack of consultation with the public resulting in the loss of such important institutions as the Language Bureau and NWT training through Aurora College. To reverse this loss, the Act should define guidelines and regulations that hold institutions to specific roles and responsibilities in Language Act implementation. At the community level, the Act must apply to community governments - indeed, important language initiatives such as signage cannot be enforced without such legislation. The Act should also apply to the private sector including banks, department stores, grocery stores, airlines, licensing agencies, and dentists.

3. **Whose Language Rights and Privileges:** Advisory Board members say language rights and privileges should *not* be based on population size but on an individual's right to communicate or learn in their own language. In the case of language groups, funding for language communities should not be based on population but on need with need defined by an accepted language assessment tool.

Summary of Recommendations Section 1-8

The following Table 2 summarizes issues and Advisory Board recommendations for Sections 1-8 of the Official Languages Act.

Table 2. Summary of Issues and Recommendations, Sections 1-8

Issues	Recommendations
No definition or criteria for official languages	Define Official Languages to Reflect Traditional Geographic Areas
Act is restrictive – applies to government but excludes municipalities and private sector	Apply Act to all government departments, boards, agencies; private contractors receiving government funding; and community governments
Not clear on who has language rights and privileges – individuals or groups	Base right and privileges on individual's right to communicate and learn in own language without reference to population size. Fund language groups on need based on accepted language assessment tool

Sections 9-16

Issues

The words "language rights" mean there is obligation to ensure language services in the official languages. The overview of Sections 9-16 shows that French and English have a prominent position with Aboriginal Languages having lesser status. With Sections 9-16, Advisory Board members identified four sets of issues related to the provision of services in the official languages where aboriginal languages have lesser status including: Use of Official Languages in the Legislative Assembly; Printing of Government Documents; Language Rights in Courts; and Government Delivered Services.

1. **Official Languages in the Legislative Assembly:** Under the Act, any person can make a presentation to the Legislative Assembly in any Official Language. Currently the Legislative Assembly contracts Interpreter/Translator (IT) services on an "as-needed" basis. Therefore, if a person wishes to speak through an interpreter the onus of securing interpreting services is the presenter's responsibility. But under the current system it is much easier for the public to access English and French interpreter/translators than aboriginal interpreter/translators.

2. **Printed Government Documents**: Section 10 of the Act establishes that NWT Acts and journals must be published in English and French. (Original and interpreted versions of sound recordings of public debates are provided on reasonable request). Because of this requirement, the NWT Official Languages Act and others are published only in English and French. However, the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories can direct publishing of NWT Acts and journals in one or more other Official Languages, but there is no requirement to do so.

   Section 11 establishes that certain formal documents must be published in English and French if it fulfils the following four criteria: document is a formal or legal-type document; document is "pursuant to some legislative authority" - that is, the document was produced because an Act or Regulation says it has to be produced; document is a notice directed to the public; and document is a notice from the Legislative Assembly, the Government of the Northwest Territories or government board or agency. In all cases the document need only be printed in English or French - unless the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories directs document printing in any of the Official Aboriginal Languages, but again there is no requirement to do so.

3. **Language Rights in the Courts:** Court documents can be filed in English or French. The Act does not address the need to file court documents in any of the other Official Languages. Further, to participate in court proceedings in official Aboriginal Languages, individuals must request an interpreter in advance with responsibility for providing interpreting services with the government institution. In other words, individuals wishing to speak any Official Language other than English or French, should not expect language services, rather they must give notice of their interpreting needs in advance. In providing court orders and decisions in Official Aboriginal Languages, the court will order oral translation if the court believes it a reasonable request. Not only must the Official Aboriginal Language speaker request interpreting services, they must also prove that the request is "reasonable".

4. **Obtaining Public Government Services:** Government Head Offices in Yellowknife and Regional Offices must provide language services in English and French and language services in Official Aboriginal Languages if: 1) there is "significant demand"; or 2) "nature" of the Office. Significant demand is not defined - in the federal Official Languages Act, significant demand is based on numbers, which may not be appropriate for the Northwest Territories. "Nature" of the Office is taken to mean Health and Social Services for the most part.

   Past experience shows that in our system, interpreting services have not been readily available. In deciding the extent of language rights, it is important to consider effective and efficient implementation measures. For example, in establishing interpreting services, the government may want to consider: certification and accreditation of interpreters and translators; registry of approved interpreters and translators; development of a professional interpreter/translator association; providing resources; and appropriate budgets for contracting interpretation and translation.

Ms Gullberg pointed out that there are language rights that go beyond the NWT Official Languages Act. For example, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Section 14 guarantees assistance of an interpreter in criminal proceedings for a party or witness who does not understand the language in which court proceedings are conducted.

In determining language rights, Ms Gullberg suggested two approaches could be used: 1) decide what the language rights should be and put them into practice and 2) look at current practice and assess whether current practice is meeting theoretical objectives.

Comments and Recommendations

Gwich'in Elder

"In the past, our elders have been through a lot of difficult times, but they never gave up – they always continued on and now we have a big job to do and it's a big project to work on. As we work on it, we can't give up – we have to keep our minds strong."

Raymond Sonfrere, Dene Cultural Institute

Advisory Board members were in consensus that the current Act does not adequately reflect the Aboriginal perspective of language nor adequately guarantee Official Aboriginal language rights. Board members offered a number of comments - many more wide ranging than those issues identified.

1. **Revise the Act to Incorporate Aboriginal Perspective**: Board members say the Act should be re-written or revised by an Aboriginal-language speaking legal counsel, written first in the Aboriginal languages, to ensure Aboriginal perspective of language is clearly defined. The Languages Commissioner should be called upon to assist in amending and ratifying the Act. The Act should remain as "stand-alone" legislation cross referenced and put in context with other related legislation including: Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canada Languages Act, Code of Human Rights and others.
2. **Printed Government Departments:** Board members say little has been done to make the public aware of language legislation. To enhance greater public awareness, they say the Commissioner of the Northwest Territories must direct publication of same documents in Official Aboriginal Languages including birth certificates, driver's licenses, and health cards. Further, the Act, along with other important Acts - Wildlife Act, Education Act, Child Welfare Act - should be published in all Official Languages including user-friendly audio and printed summary form for distribution to government offices, communities and libraries - the latter including the NWT Legislative Assembly Library. Likewise, background information should be developed and circulated on events leading to 1984 Aboriginal Language Task Force, NWT Official Languages Act and current 10-year Act Review.
3. **Language Rights:** Board members say quality Official Aboriginal Language service continues to be seriously compromised by a person or group having to show significant demand or important nature of the office. In all cases, the onus for securing interpreting/translation services rests with the individual or group. Here the individual/group must first be aware of their language rights, then they must request language service and finally show significant demand or important nature of the office. Within these restrictions, government departments cannot possibly offer efficient or effective language services - especially in situations where effective and efficient communication is critical, and often of an emergency nature, for example, in

the courts, policing, transportation centres, airline safety, education and health. The Act should direct government departments to provide high quality language service in the Official Aboriginal Languages, without restrictions of significant demand or nature of office.

Board members say the Act should define how language services will be delivered in both the Legislative Assembly and government departments, boards and agencies.

Further, Board members say government has to work with aboriginal people in developing proactive aboriginal language service -for example, it should be mandatory that government departments annually provide government workers with orientation in language learning and culture.

And the public should be made aware of how government departments are upholding the Act including measures government has taken in developing a multi-lingual workforce.

Board members say all language rights and services must be transferable with respect to self-government. Elders say when Treaties were signed it was agreed that in the future nothing would change culture and language. Government language services and the Language Act should reflect the spirit and intent of the Treaties.

4. **Language Organization & Delivery**. Board members say the government has a mandate to promote and enhance Official Aboriginal Languages. But the government's mandate is not reflected in government actions such as closing the Language Bureau. Act Amendments should therefore include re-establishing a language bureau with full range of interpreting and translation services for all regions.

   Although the creation of Language Communities has been positive in channeling more government funding to language communities, Board members say much needs to be done to provide more resources for language enhancement and development. To that end, Board members say that government should not abrogate their responsibilities vis-à-vis language enhancement. Language communities should not have the sole responsibility for NWT language enhancement and development. Others should have expanded responsibility including the Office of the Languages Commissioner. To meet this need, the Act should define which agencies and organizations - public, private and quasi public - have roles and responsibilities with respect to Aboriginal Language enhancement and development including those of coordination, planning, research, delivery, monitoring and evaluation.

   The Act should make provision to ensure official language teacher training and interpreter/translator training. The Act should guarantee accurate interpreting and translation.

   The Act should highlight the importance of language research ensuring research on language use by elders and youth, and technical terminology used by various government departments.

Table 2. Summary of Issues and Recommendations, Sections 9-16

Issues	***Recommendations***
Language use in Assembly on as needed basis	Maintain permanent Interpreter/Translator staff for all Official Aboriginal Languages
Printed government documents required in English and French but in Aboriginal Languages only if directed by the Commissioner of the NWT	Ensure high profile documents are printed in all Official languages: Acts, birth certificates, drivers' licenses, health cards and court proceedings
English and French required in courts but Aboriginal language use requires test of "reasonableness"	No restrictions on use of Aboriginal languages
Government services required in English and French but Aboriginal language service dependent on "significant demand" or "nature of office"	No restrictions of "significant demand" or "nature of office"

Sections 18-25

Issues

The Office of the Languages Commissioner was established to ensure that government institutions recognize rights, status and privileges of each of the Official Languages and comply with the spirit and intent of the Act. In meeting this responsibility, the Languages Commissioner has the power to make investigations - either self-initiated or based on a complaint from the public - and produce findings with recommendations for action. If the department does not take appropriate action, the Languages Commissioner has the power to make a report to the Legislative Assembly for action.

The Languages Commissioner must make an annual report of Office of the Languages Commissioner activities including: recommendations for proposed changes to the Act - if considered necessary or desirable in order to uphold the spirit and intent of the Act.

In assisting the Languages Commissioner, the Act establishes that the Languages Commissioner meet with representatives from each Official Language group acting in an advisory capacity, not less than once a year.

With Sections 18-25, legal counsel Shannon Gullberg identified two sets of issues related to the roles and responsibilities of the Office of the Languages Commissioner including:

1. **Powers of Enforcement**: In the Province of Quebec, where there is a perceived violation of the Act, the Quebec Language Commission has the power to hold hearings and make orders, thus serving as both an administrative and quasi-judicial body. In Manitoba, only the courts can make declaratory orders - for example, declaring there is a violation of the Act - but without power to enforce compliance with the Act. In the NWT, recommendations are brought to the political authority - namely the Legislative Assembly - where recommendations can lead to system-wide actions with broad impacts, as opposed to orders on a case by case basis.

   In considering amendments to the Act related to the Office of the Languages Commissioner, it is important to consider enforcement - more specifically: 1) Is enforcement only to make the violator aware they have violated the Act with hopes the violation will be corrected? 2) Is punishment in the form of fines or other penalties important in preventing others from violating the Act? 3) Is complainant satisfaction the purpose of enforcement? or 4) Is enforcement an overall watchdog function - an institution that monitors language services ensuring high quality language services and programs?

2. ***Independence of the Office of the Languages Commissioner:*** How does one ensure the independence of the Office? Currently, the Commissioner reports to the Legislative Assembly, ensuring independence from government departments, boards and agencies in making recommendations. Some Ombudsman offices ensure accountability and independence by: 1) appointing ombudsman to sit for only one term, avoiding any suggestion reappointment depends on how recommendations and investigations are carried out, and 2) extending the term of the appointment past the life of the Legislative Assembly so a current Assembly will never have political authority over the appointee and 3) disallowing any kind of negotiation, even on points of salary so there is no suggestion an appointee would fail to enforce effectively as a condition for increased salary and/or benefits.

   Although Languages Commissioner independence from government is ensured by reporting directly to the Legislative Assembly, there is need to streamline Languages Commissioner Office operation including authority for staffing and administering contracts.

Comments and Recommendations

Advisory Board members agree the Office should have the primary role of promoting aboriginal language enhancement and development including awareness of the Act and the Office through community meetings, attending First Nations Assemblies, attending Language Community meetings, publishing newsletters, and website development. Further, the Office should be in a more visible high profile location with offices that clearly reflect the cultural importance of the Official Languages. The Office of the Languages Commissioner and Languages Commissioner titles should be named using aboriginal language in the Act.

Members say the Advisory Board should include board members from each Official Language group - members who speak their own languages, have strong backgrounds in language enhancement and development, and are well respected in their respective communities. Board members should include Elders from each Official Language group with recognition in legislation along with their roles and responsibilities and title in an aboriginal name in the Act. The Act should direct the Board to meet at least once a year and for a working group, at least three times a year.

Board members say there are many departments, boards and agencies and other organizations that have programs related to aboriginal language delivery - each operating independently from the other. Under the current system, it is not clear which department, board and agency should obtain funding or how much funding they should receive or

what is accomplished collectively. It is recommended that the Office be established as a coordinating, planning, monitoring and evaluation agency with the aim to improve efficiency and effectiveness for all departments, boards and agencies with a budget that reflects the needs and ability for Office to deliver those needs.

Board members say the Act should include measures that clearly define the independent nature of the Office including ability to hire staff and administer Office operations.

Members say the Act should ensure that policies are based on research that provides accurate and consistent baseline data on language growth or decline. More importantly, the Office should have research and monitoring responsibilities that tie territorial-wide socio-linguistic trends to those critical success factors that enhance and maintain strong aboriginal use in the NWT.

Members say in supporting promotional activities, the Act should direct the Office to develop and maintain a central library containing current research, historical information, other language acts, research from other jurisdictions relevant to language legislation and language enhancement initiatives. Materials should be published in all Official Languages either in print, audio or video form, whichever is most appropriate. In addition, technology such as aboriginal language fonts should be distributed to government departments, organizations and individuals.

Members say it is important there are trained and certified interpreters and translators. To meet this need, the Office should have responsibility for coordinating language communities in developing a reliable interpreter/translator certification process with a registry of certified interpreters and translators - similar to the interpreter and translator certification process the Maori Language Commission oversees which is outlined in the Maori Language Act.

Members say the Act should recognize that languages change and develop and recognize the need to work with Elders' messages and modern technology in documenting and developing language of youth and specific workplaces such as those of justice, transportation, health, education, wildlife and so forth.

Members say the Act should establish an operating budget with adequate support staff for the Office to undertake promotion, research, monitor, maintain a language institute, and coordinate activities. The Office should also be supported by regional staff, one in each language community to assist in promotional and research and monitoring activities. The Office budget should include adequate funds for interpreting and translation of meetings and documents in all Official Languages.

Table 2. Summary of Issues and Recommendations, Sections 18-25

Issues	*Recommendations*
There are gaps in language enhancement and development including: coordination, planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation	Languages Commissioner Office should have legislated powers and authority for coordination, planning, research, monitoring, evaluation and enforcement
Measures for independence of Languages Commissioner need to be expanded	Appoint Languages Commissioner to preside in overlap of at least two Legislative Assemblies so Assembly has no political authority over appointee Role of LC as an ombudsman should be reflected in regulations that empower the LC to operate independently in administering Office operations.

Conclusions

It is fortunate that this Review of the Official Languages Act is underway. With the support of the Special Committee, we can continue our work towards achieving the goal of entrenchment of language rights for *ALL* residents of the NWT.

"How could we encourage aboriginal languages to be recognized? I remember thinking about that and those were very difficult times ... I can remember those times ... we felt strongly about protecting the language and culture of the people. As you prepare for this review, I urge you to remain focused on this very task. The review allows you to reflect on the past and present. You assess and justify the future needs for the preservation and promotion of all Official Languages in the Northwest Territories."

Glenna Hansen, Commissioner of the NWT

Participants

1. William Firth, Gwich'in Language Community Coordinator, Gwich'in Tribal Council, Ft McPherson
2. Liza Andre, Gwich'in Social and Cultural Institute, Tsiigehtchic
3. Mrs. Jane Charlie, Elder, Fort McPherson
4. Liz Hanson, Aboriginal Language Instructor, Inuvik
5. Fred Rabesca, Community Language Worker, Fort Good Hope
6. Raymond Sonfrere, Dene Cultural Institute, Hay River
7. Jean-Marie Broda, Dene Cultural Institute in Hay River.
8. Daniel Lamoureux, Franco TéNOISE, Yellowknife
9. Emily Kudlak, Inuvialuit Cultural Centre, Holman Island
10. Renie Arey, Inuvialuit Cultural Centre, Inuvik.
11. Ms. Rosie Albert, Interpreter/translator, retired Inuvialuit Instructor.
12. Victor Allen, Elder, Inuvik.
13. Sarazine Basil, Elder, Lutselk'e
14. JC Catholique, Language Activist, Lutselk'e,
15. Mary Siemens, Dogrib Translation Committee, Yellowknife
16. Helen Balanoff, NWT Literacy Council, Yellowknife
17. Camilla Tutcho, Elder, DEA, Deline
18. Jane Modeste, Interpreter/Translator, Deline
19. Madeline Rabesca, Elder, Fort Rae
20. Phillip Rabesca, Chair, Dogrib Community Language Committee
21. Elizabeth Mackenzie, Elder, Fort Rae
22. Ms Campbell, TLC Coordinator for the Sahtu Region, Norman Wells
23. Victor Menacho, Elder, Tulita.
24. Doris Camsell, Aboriginal Language Instructor, Hay River
25. Joachim Bonnetrouge, Language Community Coordinator, DehCho First Nations
26. Adele Hardisty, Elder, Wrigley
27. Joe Bonnetrouge, Elder, Fort Providence
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29. Andy Norwegian, South Slavey Teaching and Learning Centre, Deh Cho Divisional Education Council, Fort Simpson
30. George Mackenzie, Cultural Instructor, Rae-Edzo
31. Jonas Lafferty, Interpreter/Translator, Dogrib Region
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Speakers:

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